



BROADCASTING BALTIMORE

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Council on
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Resources



DHC
Digitizing Hidden Collections

WJZ 13

WJZ-TV BALTIMORE

Broadcasting Baltimore: Digitizing Hidden Histories in the WJZ-TV

Collection is a three-year CLIR-funded project that hired an audiovisual archivist for in-house digitization of 1000 hours of unique audiovisual content from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Moving Image Archive's WJZ-TV Collection. The 1000 hours selected contains previously hidden stories documenting the voices of underrepresented communities in Baltimore City from 1977-2000. Voices represented in the project include Black Americans, the Lumbee Tribe, Asian Americans, immigrant populations, the LGBTQIA+ community's fight for equal rights, among many others. Digitized materials will be made accessible via ArchivesSpace, Aviary, Digital Public Library of America, and Internet Archive.



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We began by digitizing the rest of the WJZ-TV series, **City Line** (1982-1989). It was a public affairs television program with topics centered around Baltimore City's Black community and had a Black cast and crew. Among the tapes was the 200th celebratory episode. The show was presented with an award from the governor's office "demonstrating skills, sensitivity and community awareness in [its] production." Favorite episodes selected by the audience included *A Salute to Prince*, *Atheism*, *Public Housing*, *Vanessa Del Rio*, and *Miles Davis*.



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Described as "WJZ's nightclub on the air," **Shakedown** was a local Baltimore dance show. Every Saturday evening, host Harold Anthony invited viewers to hear the hottest music, see the best dancers and some of his favorite people from in and around Baltimore. The show was seen as a revival of **The Buddy Deane Show** which aired from 1957-1964 until it was canceled due to integration controversy.



Shakedown regularly featured local musicians and radio personalities in addition to dancers. It was one of Baltimore local, John Waters' favorite show and he praised it for not having "yuppies" and found it "refreshing [because] it showed a side of Baltimore that [he] happened to like." Barefoot Bruce and Cha Cha were among his favorite dancers.

Focal Point was sponsored by WJZ-TV and the Greater Baltimore Committee "to make it possible for people in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area to take part in the search for better solutions to the problems of modern urban life." It was envisioned as a town hall meeting large enough to accommodate the city through television. Informal discussion viewer groups were set up around the city in hopes of creating a more engaged citizenry.



Topics in our collection include the history of Baltimore, urban renewal, mass transit, racism, adolescent offenders, and teenage pregnancy. We hope that by making this footage more easily searchable it can be used to further discussions happening today because after all the show envisioned itself as "the drama of sight and sound joining those who strike forcefully for progress to fulfill the heritage of a city."



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Ethnic festivals started out as neighborhood parties and over the years grew into larger events that drew thousands of people from in and outside Baltimore. Largely funded by the city, different groups created an event to celebrate Baltimore's diversity. Every summer people would look at the schedule to see the "Showcase of Nations" lineup.



We transferred many **Eyewitness News** tapes looking at specific dates for community festival footage. Among the segments found were the AFRAM Festival, American Indian Festival, Latino Hispanic Festival, Asian Festival, Jewish American Festival, Caribbean Festival, Ukrainian Festival, and many more!



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Evening Magazine was a show designed to add a local focus to the news. It was created in reaction to the FCC's newly enacted "Prime Time Access Rule" which gave back the half-hour preceding prime-time to local stations. The rule prohibited these stations from accepting network programming for that time slot.



One of the hidden stories we digitized was a prime-time feature about Black folk artist, Walter Flax. Flax grew up around Norfolk, Virginia, and lived in Yorktown. Growing up in a Navy community, he had aspirations to join but ultimately made a living as a handyman. For over sixty years, he created more than 100 scrap metal and wood vessels in his yard. One work, *Untitled (Ship)* can be seen in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.



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**Learn more and view collection
highlights by scanning the QR code**

Acknowledgements

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